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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 001448

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ICRC](#) [UZ](#) [TI](#)
SUBJECT: ICRC PLANS TO DEMARCHE KARIMOV

REF: TASHKENT 1258 (NOTAL)

Classified By: CDA BRAD HANSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

11. (C) Summary: On August 8, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Regional Delegation for Central Asia Head told poloff that ICRC has received no response from the Government on restarting its prison monitoring program since their last abortive attempt in May and is now considering delivering a demarche on the subject directly to President Karimov. The ICRC is also considering delivering a demarche to the President of Tajikistan. In addition, a new ICRC Central Asia Regional Delegation Head will take over in September and the ICRC's request to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference in Bishkek as an observer was rejected. The Delegation Head said he would not be surprised if the Government requested the ICRC to restart its prison monitoring program shortly before the EU reconvenes in mid-October to review sanctions against Uzbekistan. While we understand ICRC's frustration at the lack of response from the Uzbek Ministries, we are doubtful that the Government will allow a demarche of the President to go forward, or at least not until after the expected presidential elections in December. End summary.

12. (C) On August 8, during a week-long visit to Tashkent, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Regional Delegation for Central Asia Head Edmond Corthesy told poloff that the ICRC has received no response from the Government on restarting its prison monitoring program since their last abortive attempt in May. According to him, the ICRC has exhausted its attempts at dialogue through the Ministries, who do not have the authority to make a decision on restarting the prison monitoring program, and now must approach the Government at the highest possible level. While back in Geneva at ICRC headquarters, Corthesy will discuss delivering a presidential demarche to Karimov. The ICRC is also considering the same approach with Tajikistan. Corthesy did not know when the demarche may be delivered, but suggested that it might occur early in 2008.

13. (C) Corthesy said that he would make a final two-week trip to Tashkent on September 2 with his successor, Yves Giavannoni, who has worked extensively before in Latin America. Corthesy noted that ICRC was looking forward to the arrival of Ambassador Richard Norland in Tashkent, as his ICRC colleagues in Afghanistan reported having developed a good working relationship with him. In addition, Corthesy

said that ICRC requested observer status at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in Bishkek, but was told that there was not enough room at the location where the summit was being held to accommodate additional observers.

¶4. (C) ICRC's prison monitoring program in Uzbekistan, which began after a formal agreement was signed between the Government and ICRC in 2001, was suspended in December 2004 after Uzbek officials failed to facilitate monitoring according to ICRC's worldwide modalities. On May 21, ICRC attempted to restart its prison monitoring program with a week-long visit to a Tashkent prison, but called off the visit after a few hours once it became clear that prison authorities would not allow unfettered access to all prisoners (reftel). Corthesy believes that the Government's decision to allow the May visit was a clear attempt at winning favor with European governments in the lead up to their decision the same month on renewing sanctions against Uzbekistan. He would not be surprised if the Uzbek government contacted ICRC about restarting its program roughly three weeks before the EU reconvenes in mid-October to review sanctions again. According to Corthesy, the ICRC resented being treated as a political bargaining chip by both the Europeans and the Uzbek government.

¶5. (C) Comment: The ICRC's frustration at the lack of dialogue with the Ministries is understandable, and Corthesy is correct in asserting that the only person capable of making a decision on restarting prison monitoring is President Karimov. But we are doubtful that any request to directly demarche the President will be accepted. Rather than a flat out rejection, the ICRC's demarche request is likely to go unanswered or the Government will find many

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convenient reasons why it must be indefinitely delayed. Even if the demarche eventually goes forward, it is unlikely to happen before the expected presidential elections in December.
HANSON